

The Ancient Hebrew Wedding

To understand Messiah in more intimate way and understand the role of the church as a Jesus bride.

Understanding this cultural aspect of the scriptures will help us to understand the word on a deeper level.

It will help us understand things in regards to prophecy.

It will Help understand our relationship with our Messiah and Bridegroom.

It will help us understand our walk in this faith, and how to live and prepare to meet Jesus.

The stages of the Hebrew wedding

Modern days wedding and the lead to it is very different from the Ancient Biblical time weddings.

There are several stages very important and quite different from the modern days. In the modern days the big final wedding day is the most important part. In ancient times the most important part is in the beginning and the final day is just fulfilment of what was already prepared.

1. Shiddukhin - Match -making stage

2. Erusin - Betrothal stage - The couple pledges to marry one another. Similar to engagement.

Sanctification on account of the bride becoming “sanctified (dedicated) to the groom.

3. Nissuin - The marriage

Each stage has certain ceremonies and practices associated with it. And we can find them true out the Bible.

I Shiddukhin

Genesis 2:18 - The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.

God desired to choose the bride for Adam.

Shiddukhin refers to the preliminary arrangements” Negotiations” prior to a legal betrothal. (engagement)

In ancient times, marriage was looked upon as more of an alliance for reasons of survival, practicality or prospirate.

For example, a king’s child would marry other king’s child for political reason.

The concept of romantic love remained a secondary issue, if considered at all. Romantic love grew over time.

It was generally the fathers that did the deliberating of this stage with the groom to the father of the bride.

It was common for the children to be betrothed to each other. Legally together but not consummated.

It was seldom that marriages were forced on young people that had no interest for each other.

If the kids were no matured when betrothed to each other, they would wait before consummation.

Still today many Orthodox marriages are arranged by a marriage brokers or match maker called Shadchan.

*Judges 14: 1-3 Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman.
² When he returned, he said to his father and mother, "I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah; now get her for me as my wife."*

³ His father and mother replied, "Isn't there an acceptable woman among your relatives or among all our people? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?"

But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me. She's the right one for me."

⁴ (His parents did not know that this was from the LORD, who was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines; for at that time they were ruling over Israel.)

⁵ Samson went down to Timnah together with his father and mother. As they approached the vineyards of Timnah, suddenly a young lion came roaring toward him.

Samson asked his parents to do formal proposal. To begin the process of setting the terms for the marriage.

"My son wants to marry your daughter. What can we do to make this happen?" If this proposal was accepted, would begin the process of setting the terms of the marriage.

II Erusin - Betrothal stage

Once the match had been made, the terms of marriage would be made and set, in the form of a Ketubah.

Like a contract. Legally binding document, its primary purpose to protect the bride.

The father of the bride would use his wisdom to look out for the best interest of his daughter. He was responsible what would happen to his daughter in the future.

Men, you have very important role. Not only regarding your wife but your daughters too.

The bride was seen as being completely under her father's control. For example, if a man sleeps with a virgin, they generally got married, but the father had to consent.

Exodus 22 ¹⁶ *"If a man seduces a virgin who is not pledged to be married and sleeps with her, he must pay the bride-price, and she shall be his wife. ¹⁷ If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he must still pay the bride-price for virgins.*

The Ketubah consisted of several stipulations:

- The conditions and requirements of the groom and bride to each other. "The vaults" – promises. Men would promise that he will protect, provide, have children...The bride – serve you, mother...
- The bride's estate inventory – An accounting of assets (cash, property, livestock, businesses, etc.) that the bride contributed to the new husband's estate when she married him. From Bride's father blesses her on her way for this marriage **with disclaimer**, if something happens, he is taking it back.
- The bride price – This was usually set at 50 shekels of silver and was a cash penalty for divorce without cause (adultery) or taking a second wife without consent and permission of the bride and/or her father. Only rich people had sometimes more than one wife. Most royalties. For children like Abraham.
- The dowry "mohar" – the price of the bride paid by the groom's father and/or groom to the bride's father.

In ancient days, marriage was not an agreement between two individuals, but between two families.

The newly married couple usually did not find a new home for themselves but a nook in the groom house.

The family of the groom gained, but the family of the bride lost a valuable member who helped with all household and other tasks.

Therefore, the father of the bride receives the equivalent of her value as a useful member of the family. Its not a price of the women, it was looking someone of this household. This was honoring the family giving the bride.

The father who kept the whole Dowry from the groom's father for himself was considered unkind and harsh.

The father giving back to the bride what's been given.

On top of the Mohar, the groom would give costly gifts, called "Mattan" to the bride as a sign on his commitment and as a sign of his promise to return for her. (Usually in a year apart) = Remember me, I'll be back

Genesis 34:11-12 ¹ *Then Shechem said to Dinah's father and brothers, "Let me find favor in your eyes, and I will give you whatever you ask. ¹² Make the price for the bride (Mohar) and the gift (Mattan) I am to bring as great as you like, and I'll pay whatever you ask me. Only give me the young woman as my wife."*

Once all the stipulations had been agreed, the proceeding of the betrothal could occur. The contract is signed.

The groom and his father would go to the bride's father's house and knock on the door. "A tradition"

The bride's decision would then be made known by whether the door was open or not.

Revelation 3:20 ²⁰ *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.* - wedding talk. An invitation for reunion from Jesus!

If opened, the groom and his father would share a covenantal meal with the bride and her family, and partake of bread and wine.

Then will come the public ceremony of betrothal with 2 or 3 witnesses.

The bride and the groom would undergo a Mikveh

They would then stand under a chuppoah (canopy) and the groom would give the chattan (gifts) to his bride. This is when he says "I will come back for you, wait for me".

The Ketubah would then be signed, the marriage agreement with 3 copies. One for the father of the bride, one for the married couple and one sealed copy for the local judicial court that can be open by judge if any accusations.

Once the Ketubah was signed, the bride and groom were legally married and betrothed-promised to one another

They were legally together but not physically bonded.

The groom would go back to his father's house and prepare a place for him and his bride to dwell. **Jesus?**

All the time the bride is been protected, from the father, the groom, a contract. **The Church**

During this time, the bride would learn all about the groom and how to be a pleasing wife. We now.

She would also prepare her wedding garments in preparation for her wedding. Wedding dress.

During the betrothal period, the bride and the groom would not see each other for a year.

However, messages were passed between each other by the friend of the groom.

Divorce (send out, put away) and adultery (uncleanness that breaks the covenant)

Even during betrothal, a divorce certificate was required to cancel the covenant.

If the groom divorces his wife without due cause, or committed adultery, not only would he have to pay the bride price the 50 silver shackles, but he would also have to return the bride's estate inventory in the contract.

Matthew 19:3-6 ³ *Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"*

⁴ *"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'^[a] ⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become **one flesh**'^[b]?" ⁶ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."*

Two married are one flesh. Divorce is a form of murder because divides one flesh.

Deuteronomy 24:1 If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house

The only legal excuse for women to divorce is adultery.

Woman can be realized from that marriage covenant by certificate of divorce or by the death of her husband.

The problem was that men were sending women away without a certificate of divorce, keeping her belongings.

This puts the women in a very vulnerable state, as well as publicly shaming her and her father's house.

If a men send his wife away without divorce certificate, she becomes adulteress or can't marries other men.

If you are both fully walking in the character of Messiah there should be no reason for you to divorce. Because you are laying your lives down for each other. It won't be any ground for divorce.

III Nissuin

The word "missuin" means "to take", coming from the root word "naso" which means to lift up. After the year of waiting and preparation.

Not only would the groom come to take his bride, he would honor her and "lift her up"

When the groom comes for his bride, where would be great joy and celebration and shofar blasts. **Jesus coming**

These celebrations usually happened in the night. And the bride would see the light of the procession in the night and have to go out and meet the groom as he comes for her.
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She would have to have a lamp ready, light it up herself and go out in the dark and meet her groom coming from his father's house. Going troths his light and hearing the sounds of shofar blasts. Drown to each other.

Although the bride knew to expect her groom after about a year, she did not know the exact day or hour.

It was the father of the groom who gave final approval for him to return to collect his bride. The father decided when to send the son to be a husband and go and bring his bride in the father's house. **God**

Fathers, you have an important role in your son's lives to become a man.

For those reasons, the bride kept her oil lamps ready at all times, as the groom usually come in the night.

The groom would then take his bride back to his father's house to consummate and celebrate.

The couple would finalize their vows and drink a cup of wine to signify their union.

There was a covenant meal at the betrothal and there is one more at the consummation night.

Consummation procedure

The wife can have up to 10 friends who would act as witnessed to the event. **The 10 virgins with the lamps.**

The groom has 2 witnesses, announcing coming of the groom with a shofar and calls from his voice.

The bride and her mother would sew the name of the couple on a cloth.

This was called the "prove of virginity" that the bride would bleed onto as she lay on top of it during copulation.

The bride and the groom would assign several formal witnesses to the event that would wait outside for a celebration, while the couple consummate the marriage in the wedding bed.

The entire wedding party make their way to the groom's house and the door is closed when the last person in the procession enters. When the house door gets locked. **The 5 foolish virgins without oil knock on the door.**

Jesus "I never knew you."

The Chuppah cloth used in the betrothal ceremony was used as a covering for the wedding bed.

Once the marriage was consumed, the groom would hand the proof of virginity to the witnesses, and the celebrations would begin. This cloth would be kept as a prove of virginity.

Grate importance was put on the virginity of the bride. If she was not found virgin she could be stoned.

The witnesses were there for the specific job of confirming the bride's virginity for the parents and everyone.

If the bride was found guilty of adultery, she would lose everything, and possibly get stoned and the groom would keep everything.

Shekels current estimated exchange rate

The bride price was 50 shekels of silver. 100 shekels for wrong accusation of harlotry, bride not been virgin. How much was 50 shekels of silver?

1 denarius / dime = 1 day's wage for 12 hours of labor. Same as a silver dime in USA = 10 USA cents.

\$15x12=\$180 current pay for a day minimum wage.

14 denarii / dimes = 1 ounce of silver

14x180=\$2520 the cost of one ounce silver

1 shekel = 0.4 of an ounces

5 shekels = 28 working days = \$5040

Jesus was sold for 30 shekels = \$30'240 or 168 days wages

50 Shekels = 280 days of work \$50'400 is 9 or 10 months working

This is the money the groom have to pay to the bride's father and he still can say NO.

Marry and Joseph

Matthew 1:18 ¹⁸ *This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about^[a]: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.*

Mary got pregnant before the marriage?...

Joseph and the father or Miriam had signed a ketubah and were legally married.

Marry was in a vulnerable position at the mercy of her husband. She was pregnant before the chuppah, no virgin cloth

Marry and Joseph were living separately at the time when she found herself pregnant.

Joseph was a righteous man. He did not want to disgrace her even if he believed she was an adulteress. He was going to divorce her secretly by handing her the divorce paper without making an accusation of adultery. Divorce without a cause. He would have to return the brides inventory and pay the bride price to her father 50 silver shekels.

It was going to cost Joseph more to divorce Marry secretly. God talked to him.

Once the marriage had been consummated , there was a huge celebration that usually lasted for 7 days at the groom's father's house.